Mary Magdalene: Joy That Can't Stay Silent

Key Scripture

"Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord!'" — John 20:18

Main Point

Mary Magdalene's story shows us that true joy is not dependent on circumstances—it is rooted in Jesus. When we encounter Him, joy becomes recognizable in His voice, anchored in His grace, and expressed through our willingness to share what He has done.

Introduction: Joyfully Different

As Christians we should make it a point each day to *be joyfully different*.

Not just different in appearance or behavior—but different in spirit. Marked by joy. Grounded in belonging to God.

That phrase captures something deeply biblical. Because the joy of the Lord is not fragile or situational. It doesn't rise and fall with life's circumstances. It remains steady because it is rooted in Christ.

Mary Magdalene's life gives us a picture of what that kind of joy looks like when it becomes personal.

Receive His Grace: Joy Begins with Rescue

Mary Magdalene's story begins with deliverance.

Luke 8:2 tells us Jesus cast seven demons out of her. However that suffering looked in fullness, the message is clear: she was bound, and Jesus set her free.

Her joy begins here—not with achievement, but with rescue.

She does not follow Jesus because she has earned anything.

She follows Him because He has given her everything.

Joy begins when we recognize what grace has done for us.

Recognize His Voice: Joy Responds to What It Knows

In John 20, Mary stands outside the empty tomb grieving. She assumes loss. She assumes finality. She assumes Jesus is gone.

Even when He is standing right in front of her, she does not recognize Him.

Until He speaks her name.

“Mary.”

And everything shifts.

Because joy recognizes its source.

Before she can process the moment, her heart responds. Something in her knows this voice. Knows this presence. Knows this love.

This is what happens when we grow familiar with Jesus—not just intellectually, but relationally. His voice becomes something we can recognize even in confusion.

Joy responds quickly when it knows who is speaking.

Recount the Good News: Joy Becomes a Message

Mary does not stay at the tomb.

She runs to the disciples and declares:

“I have seen the Lord.”

This is the natural overflow of joy—it becomes testimony.

She does not overthink it. She does not delay it. She does not soften it.

She shares it.

Because joy that is real cannot stay contained.

What she experienced becomes what she announces.

And in that moment, she becomes one of the first witnesses of the resurrection.

Not because she sought a role, but because she encountered a risen Savior.

Joy That Strengthens

Scripture says, “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Mary’s life shows why.

Her joy is not rooted in ease. It is rooted in Jesus Himself.

That joy carries her through grief at the tomb, confusion in the moment, and then into bold proclamation.

Joy becomes strength because it is anchored in something unshakable.

Conclusion: A Life That Spills Over

Mary Magdalene shows us what it looks like when joy is shaped by Jesus:

- Grace received becomes devotion
- Jesus’ voice brings clarity in confusion
- Encounter turns into testimony
- Joy becomes something shared, not stored

She does not keep her joy private.

She carries it outward.

“I have seen the Lord” becomes more than a statement—it becomes a life shaped by resurrection reality.

Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean to you to be “joyfully different” in your current season of life?
2. Where do you most need to be reminded of the grace Jesus has already given you?
3. How does Mary’s recognition of Jesus’ voice speak to your own ability to hear Him?
4. What keeps you from sharing your faith or what God has done in your life?
5. How would your daily life change if joy in Christ was your primary strength?

Prayer

Jesus,

Thank You for Mary Magdalene’s life and the picture she gives us of joy rooted in You.

Remind us of Your grace when we forget what You have done. Help us recognize Your voice when life feels unclear. And give us courage to speak about what we have seen and experienced in You.

Let our joy not depend on circumstances, but on Your presence. And let that joy become strength for every part of our lives.

Teach us to live like people who have seen the risen Lord.

In Your name,
Amen.